IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently amended) In a[[n]] multi-round electronic auction wherein an award for a given auction round is allocated amongst a plurality of highest ranked bidders, a method for providing an incentive to bidders to improve their bids during the conducting of the auction round, comprising:

dividing a total volume to be auctioned between at least a first non-zero volume to be awarded in a first auction round and a second non-zero volume to be awarded in a second auction round;

prior to conducting the first auction round, determining a non-zero allocation amount to be allocated to each of the plurality of highest ranked bidders at a conclusion of the first auction round, wherein the allocation amount associated with each of the highest ranked bidders at the conclusion of the auction round is dependent upon the rank of each of the plurality of highest ranked bidders at the conclusion of the auction round, and wherein at least a first allocation amount associated with a first bidder and a second allocation amount associated with a second bidder are different;

conducting the first auction round using a processor; and

after the first auction round has been conducted, allocating the award between at least the first bidder and the second bidder in accordance with respective ranks of the first bidder and the second bidder at conclusion of the auction round and the allocation amounts determined prior to the conducting of the auction, [[]]wherein the rank of each of the plurality of the highest bidders is based at least in part on a comparison of the amount of their respective bids; and

conducting the second auction round.

2.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the amount to be allocated to a bidder having a certain rank after conducting the first auction round is the same regardless of which bidder attains that rank.

3.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the amount to be allocated to a bidder having a certain rank after conducting the first auction round varies dependent on which bidder attains that rank.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the amount to be allocated to a certain bidder is dependent upon the rank of another bidder.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the amount to be allocated to a certain bidder is the same regardless of the rank of any other bidder.

6.   (Cancelled)

7.   (Cancelled)

8.   (Cancelled)

9.   (Cancelled)

10.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~amount to be allocated~~ <u>total volume</u> is a volume of goods.

11.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~amount to be allocated~~ <u>total volume</u> is a volume of services.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising displaying market feedback to at least one bidder while conducting the auction.

13.   (Cancelled)

14.   (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the market feedback includes a volume allocated to a given bidder.

15.   (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the volume to be allocated to the given bidder is provided only to the given bidder during the auction.

16.   (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the volume to be allocated to the given bidder is provided to a further bidder during the auction.

17.   (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the market feedback includes a rank of the at least one bidder.

18.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the bidders are electronically coupled to an auction coordinator during the conducting of the auction.

19.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the bidders submit bids to an auction coordinator online during the conducting of the auction.

20.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the auction is a reverse auction.

21.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the auction is a forward auction.

22.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising soliciting potential bidders.

23.   (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein soliciting potential bidders includes:

        preparing a request for quotation;

providing the request for quotation to potential bidders; and

requesting that potential bidders respond to the request for quotation.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein said request for quotation includes an identification of goods to be purchased.

25. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein said request for quotation includes an identification of services to be purchased.

26. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each non-zero allocation amount is expressed as a percent of a total award.

27. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each non-zero allocation amount is expressed as a quantity.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the quantity is a quantity of units.

29. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the quantity is a monetary value.

30. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the allocation amount is a range of amounts.

31. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least three bidders participate in the auction round and no award is allocated to at least one bidder.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Cancelled)

35. (Cancelled)

36. (Cancelled)

37. (Currently amended) A system ~~for dividing an award amongst a plurality of highest ranked bidders~~, comprising:

a sponsor processor <u>configured to communicate with a first bidder processor and a second bidder processor</u>;

~~a first bidder processor communicating with said sponsor processor; and~~

~~a second bidder processor communicating with said sponsor processor;~~

<u>a memory coupled with the processor and configured to store</u> wherein ~~said sponsor processor contains~~ instructions which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to:

<u>divide a total volume to be auctioned between at least a first non-zero volume to be awarded in a first auction round and a second non-zero volume to be awarded in a second auction round;</u>

prior to conducting [[an]] the first auction round, determine a non-zero allocation amount to be allocated to each of the plurality of highest ranked bidders at a conclusion of the first auction round, wherein the allocation amount associated with each of the highest ranked bidders at the conclusion of the auction round is dependent upon the rank of each of the plurality of highest ranked bidders at the conclusion of the auction round[[;]], and wherein at least a first allocation amount associated with a first bidder and a second allocation amount associated with a second bidder are different;

conduct the first ~~electronic~~ auction round; and

after the first auction round has been conducted, allocate the award between at least the first bidder and the second bidder in accordance with respective ranks of the first bidder and the second bidder at conclusion of the auction round and the allocation amounts determined prior to the conducting of the auction round[[;]], wherein the rank of each of the plurality of highest bidders is based at least in part on a comparison of the amount of their respective bids; and

conduct the second auction round.

38.   (Original) The system of claim 37, wherein said first bidder processor and said second bidder processor communicate through an auction coordinator.

39.   (Original) The system of claim 37, wherein said first bidder processor and said second bidder processor communicate through the Internet.

40.   (Currently amended) A computer readable medium having stored thereon instructions for conducting an electronic auction wherein an award for a given electronic auction round is allocated amongst a plurality of highest ranked bidders, wherein the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

dividing a total volume to be auctioned between at least a first non-zero volume to be awarded in a first auction round and a second non-zero volume to be awarded in a second auction round;

prior to conducting [[an]] the first auction round, determine a non-zero allocation amount to be allocated to each of the plurality of highest ranked bidders at a conclusion of the first auction round, wherein the allocation amount associated with each of the highest ranked bidders at the conclusion of the auction round is dependent upon the rank of each of the plurality of highest ranked bidders at the conclusion of the auction round[[;]], and wherein at least a first

allocation amount associated with a first bidder and a second allocation amount associated with a second bidder are different;

conduct the first ~~electronic~~ auction round; and

after the first auction round has been conducted, allocate the award between at least the first bidder and the second bidder in accordance with respective ranks of the first bidder and the second bidder at conclusion of the auction round and the allocation amounts determined prior to the conducting of the auction round[[;]]_, wherein the rank of each of the plurality of highest bidders is based at least in part on a comparison of the amount of their respective bids; and

conducting the second auction round.

41.   (Cancelled)